

**To the Mayor and Members of the City Council****April 3, 2012**

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**SUBJECT: STAGE 1 DROUGHT RESTRICTIONS AND VARIANCE PROCESS**

The purpose of this report is to answer questions raised at the March 27, 2012, Pre-Council meeting regarding pressure-washing restrictions currently in place. The hosing of buildings is restricted in Stage 1 of the Drought Contingency and Emergency Water Management Plan for any purpose other than fire protection or paint preparation. The use of pressure-washing for other purposes can be addressed through a variance process that is documented in the plan. A variance can be requested for any of the Stage 1 drought restrictions listed below.

**Stage 1 Drought Restrictions**

When the capacity of all of the lakes and reservoirs used by Tarrant Regional Water District reaches 75%, the City of Fort Worth enters Stage 1 Drought restrictions as follows:

- Prohibit hosing of paved areas, except to alleviate an immediate health hazard.
- Prohibit hosing of buildings or other structures, except for fire protection or surface preparation prior to painting.
- Limit landscape watering with sprinklers or irrigation systems to a twice-per-week schedule, as outlined below:
  - Residential addresses ending in an even number (0, 2, 4, 6, 8) may water on Wednesdays and Saturdays.
  - Residential addresses ending in an odd number (1, 3, 5, 7, 9) may water on Thursdays and Sundays.
  - Non-residential locations may water on Tuesdays and Fridays.
- Establishing new turf is discouraged.

**Variance Procedure**

A variance process is available for exceptions to the Stage 1 restrictions, as necessary. Completion of the following steps must be met for consideration.

- The installer or owner submits an application to the Water Department with all pertinent information. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - Name and address of the petitioner(s)
  - Purpose of water use
  - Specific provisions from which relief is requested
  - Detailed statement of the adverse effect of the provision from which relief is requested
  - Description of the relief requested
  - Period of time for which the variance is sought
  - Alternative measures that will be taken to reduce water use
  - Landscaper information and copies of the installation receipt
  - Detailed map of the location and zones to be watered with run times
  - Any other pertinent information.

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- For new turf or landscape variances, the Water Conservation Licensed Irrigator will visit each application site and determine (based on the date of installation, type of plant or grass installed, etc.) how long and how often the applicant will need to water to establish their particular landscaping.
- The applicant receives an approval or denial letter, or subsequent e-mail, to explain the restrictions that they must follow and the expiration date of their variance.

Since Stage 1 was implemented August 29, 2011, variances have been granted for large-scale properties that are not able to fully irrigate within their two days, properties establishing new landscape, athletic fields, and new construction. Some large-scale examples include the Fort Worth Zoo, Fort Worth Independent School District, and churches. Requests related to pressure washing and the hosing of paved areas have been granted based on defined health and safety concerns.

On December 13, 2011, the Council was briefed on proposed amendments to the Drought Ordinance. One of these included removal of restrictive power-washing rules in Stage 1. Staff will work with our regional conservation partners to address this change as well as other potential revisions to the Drought Ordinance and present proposed revisions to the City Council for consideration.

Should you have any questions about the Drought Contingency and Emergency Water Management Plan, please contact Water Director Frank Crumb at 817-392-8246.

**Tom Higgins**  
**City Manager**